

Wilkerson, Jackson

The two other linebackers

By PAT EDMONDSON
Battalion Sports Writer

When people talk of A&M linebackers, the names Ed Simonini and Garth Ten Napel usually pop up. Simonini and Ten Napel are the premier anchormen who will direct the Aggie defense in Saturday's opening contest against the Ole Miss Rebels. Last year's number two defense in the nation returns six of eleven starters. Five openings were left by graduating seniors.

One of the openings is at middle linebacker. The middle linebacker is the quarterback of the defense. He calls the defensive signals. It is

his job to move towards the ball and he is responsible for covering the tight end or receivers coming out of the backfield on passing situations. Grady Wilkerson and Robert Jackson are each gifted with the qualities needed to fill this vacated position.

Grady Wilkerson is a junior, 6-3, 220 and a hard hitting, fighting type player. He is a strong, aggressive linebacker who spent most of last season performing quite well on the Aggie kicking units. Wilkerson saw limited action as John Paul McCrumbley and Kenny Stratton handled most of the linebacking

duties.

"We're ready for the season to begin," said Wilkerson. "With Simonini and Ten Napel on either side of us, we've got a lot to live up to. Robert and I try to play to their standards."

Robert Jackson is a junior, 6-2, 225 and extremely quick. He is an aggressive, hustling type player who spent the last two seasons playing nose guard for Henderson County Junior College. He was voted All-America and was the Most Valuable Player in the conference both years. "I don't mind sharing duties with Grady," said Jackson.

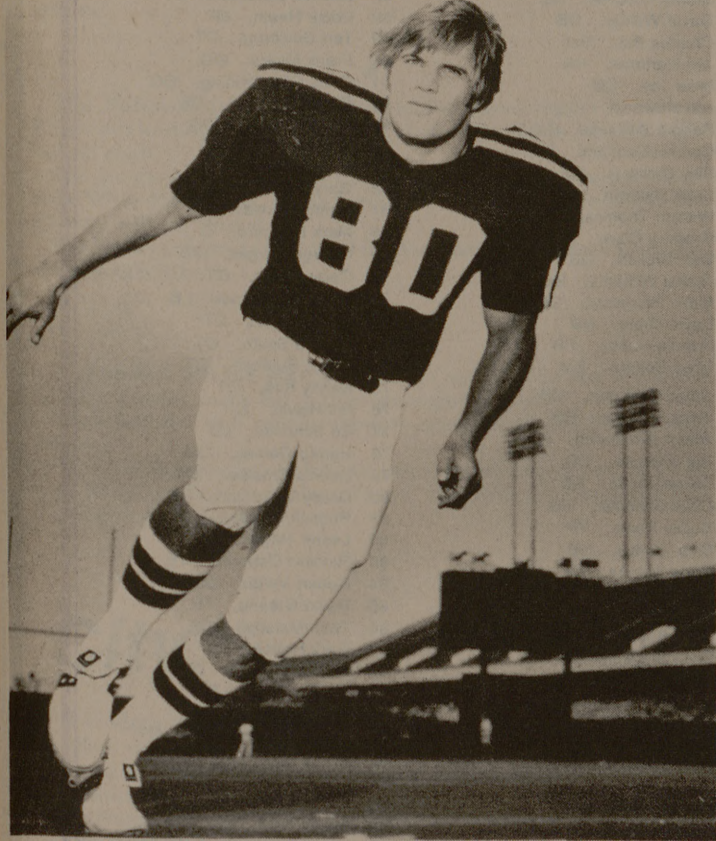
"Both of us can get the job done. I think the coaches feel the same way."

"We are very fortunate to have two quality athletes at middle linebacker this year," said linebacker coach John Paul Young.

"Grady plays with a lot of sense and makes very few mistakes. Robert lacks Grady's experience, but makes up for it in his range and mobility. Both have assets we're extremely pleased to see in a linebacker. Until one clearly shows us that he can perform better than the other, we shall continue to alternate their playing time." Asked if

he thought Wilkerson and Jackson could fill the shoes vacated by McCrumbley and Stratton, Young commented, "I think overall, including depth and technical ability, that we'll be better off at middle linebacker this year than any year that I've been at A&M!"

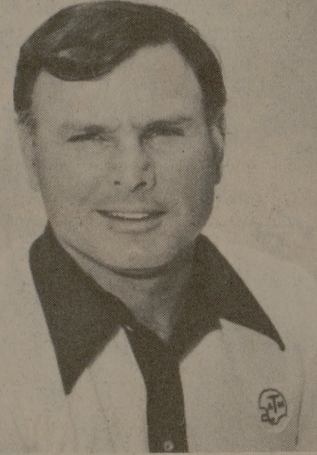
The 1975 Aggie linebackers should have a phenomenal season. Ed Simonini and Garth Ten Napel most assuredly will. Meanwhile, in the shadows stand Grady Wilkerson and Robert Jackson. Nobody should cut this duo short. It will be a long season for opposing offenses.



Grady Wilkerson



Robert Jackson



John Paul Young
Linebackers Coach

Oakland bops KC

Associated Press

OAKLAND — The Kansas City Royals had the misfortune of running into the real Oakland A's, those guys who win the World Series every October.

"When they have to win, they do it," Manager Alvin Dark said in tribute to his ballplayers after the A's completed a three-game sweep of the Royals with an impressive 9-1 victory Wednesday night.

Kansas City rode an eight-game winning streak into the Oakland Coliseum and had edged to within five games of the first place A's in the American League West. The

Royals were brought down to earth quickly, losing 8-2 to Ken Holtzman in the series opener Monday night.

Royals first baseman John Mayberry described the A's hitting that night this way: "Whoomp! whoomp! whoomp!" Sal Bando and Gene Tenace each hit home runs in the opener and combined for five homers and 10 runs batted in for the series.

On Tuesday night, eight innings of scoreless pitching by relievers Paul Lindblad, Rollie Fingers and Jim Todd forced the game into the 14th inning, when the supposedly crippled Bert Campaneris stole sec-

ond base and then scored on Bill North's two-out single for a 2-1 victory.

"Campaneris is a great competitor. All those guys are," said young Kansas City outfielder Jim Wohlford.

Kansas City's pennant hopes were dead — Manager Whitey Herzog said as much — when the series ended. And it was no mercy killing with the A's outscoring the Royals 19-4 in the three games.

"Let's be realistic. We're eight games out with 18 left. If we'd won just one of the games and were just six back, maybe we'd still have a chance," said the man who succeeded Jack McKeon as manager six weeks ago and has a 30-18 record as Royals manager.

"We'll go after them again next year."

Dark, insisting on caution, said, "We got good pitching and big hits in the series, but we've still got a long way to go to clinch it."

But Tenace, being as realistic as Herzog, said, "We're going to have to collapse to lose this thing."

Could it happen? "Not with our bullpen," said Reggie Jackson.

So, it's on to the American League playoffs for a fifth straight year and a shot at a possible fourth straight World Series title.

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League Standings

Associated Press National League					Associated Press American League				
East					East				
W	L	Pct.	GB		W	L	Pct.	GB	
Pittsburgh	82	61	.573	-	Boston	86	60	.589	-
Philadelphia	77	68	.531	6	Baltimore	80	65	.552	5½
St. Louis	75	70	.517	8	New York	74	71	.510	11½
New York	73	72	.503	10	Cleveland	70	71	.496	13½
Chicago	70	77	.476	14	Milwaukee	62	84	.425	24
Montreal	64	80	.444	18½	Detroit	55	91	.377	31
West					West				
Cincinnati	96	49	.662	-	Oakland	88	56	.611	-
Los Angeles	78	68	.534	18½	Kansas City	80	64	.556	8
S. Francisco	70	75	.483	26	Texas	72	75	.490	17½
San Diego	66	80	.452	30½	Chicago	68	76	.472	20
Atlanta	64	82	.438	32½	Minnesota	66	75	.468	20½
Houston	57	90	.388	40	California	66	79	.455	22½

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